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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY DIVISION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF 'FLORA SUN' BEACH SUNFLOWER

The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service announces the naming and release of 'Flora Sun' beach sunflower, *Helianthus debilis* Nutt. subsp. *debilis* Heiser.

'Flora Sun' beach sunflower was developed at the USDA Soil conservation Service Plant Materials Center at Brooksville, Florida. It was compared to 27 other beach sunflowers in initial evaluation trials. Of that number only one was from another state, South Carolina, with the others being from Florida.

Flora Sun was selected for its ease of establishment, low water requirement, foliage density, plant spreadability, propagation success, and its aesthetic value.

The name 'FLORA SUN' was selected as an abbreviated form of Florida sunflower and also because flora means flower. The presence of many flowers on each plant is a significant consideration also.

Flora Sun was collected in February of 1977. Although there had already been some initial interest in beach sunflower prior to the collection of Flora Sun, initial evaluation data for beach sunflower was first taken in 1976. The collections were referred to as cucumberleaf sunflower until formal identification of the specific material was done by Dr. David Hall, Extension Specialist University of Florida-IFAS, in September 1990.

Beach sunflowers were first evaluated at Brooksville in 1972. This evaluation process was not in a formalized project plan until 1976. In 1976 six beach sunflowers were evaluated under a project plan. Flora Sun, not collected until February of the following year, was not in the project.

An observation from the 1977 Technical Report States "...It has been found that blooming and seed production occur over a several months period with only a small amount of the annual seed production available at any given period. As a consequence it was deemed necessary to investigate other means of propagation and maintenance of selection." In

addition to this is the undesirable cross pollination that can occur, To preserve the genetic purity as much as possible, plants were maintained by vegetative means.

Flora Sun is a more dense and more low growing beach sunflower than any of the other accessions tested. The success rate at propagation (no less than 60 percent rooting success) is better than other lines in the same study,

Helianthus debilis, beach sunflower, occurs naturally in many locations in Florida. Additionally it has been cited in some publications as being found in Texas. There are eight subspecies of *H. debilis*. Richard P. Wain (American Journal Botany 69(10)1982) refers to the habitat of three subspecies of *Helianthus debilis* that are important in Florida. They are: 1. *H. d. vestitus* in Pinellas, Manatee and Sarasota counties. 2. *H. d. debilis* in Brevard, Palm Beach and Indian River Counties, 3, *H. d. tardiflorus* in Levy, Wakulla, Franklin and Sarasota Counties.

Breeder stock of 'Flora Sun' will be maintained by the USDA Soil Conservation Service's Plant Materials Center at Brooksville, Florida. While seed production will be significant, propagation will be by vegetative means so as to protect the genetic purity of the cultivar as well as the native populations,

Marc Bayley (acting)

James B. Newman, Director
Ecological Science Division
USDA, Soil Conservation Service
Washington, D. C.

7/24/91
Date

Niles Glasgow

T. Niles Glasgow
State Conservationist
USDA, Soil Conservation Service
Gainesville, Florida

7/22/91
Date